

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/539,392

Examiner

Liang-che Alex Wang

Applicant(s)

SMITH, STEPHEN

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 10/04/2004.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-3 and 5-44.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 31 March 2000 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date 11/1/04.
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____.

HOSAIN ALAM

SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.
2. In view of the appeal brief filed on 10/4/2004, PROSECUTION IS HEREBY REOPENED. A notice of allowance is set forth below.

To avoid abandonment of the application, appellant must exercise one of the following two options:

- (1) file a reply under 37 CFR 1.111 (if this Office action is non-final) or a reply under 37 CFR 1.113 (if this Office action is final); or,
- (2) request reinstatement of the appeal.

If reinstatement of the appeal is requested, such request must be accompanied by a supplemental appeal brief, but no new amendments, affidavits (37 CFR 1.130, 1.131 or 1.132) or other evidence are permitted. See 37 CFR 1.193(b)(2).

3. Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with James W. Proscia on 11/01/2004.
4. The application has been amended as follow:
 - a. Please replace Claims 1, 3, 6, 10, 11, 13, 16-23 as follow:

Examiner's Amendment:

1. An online system of locating a automotive (consumer) product having specific configuration in an enterprise production pipeline and inventory, comprising:

a locate client process operable to:

receive automotive product configuration data; and

generate a search request message incorporating the automotive product configuration data in response to user input;

an inventory database that stores automotive product availability data for automotive products that are on the order bank, being produced, in-transit to distribution facilities, and automotive products at the distribution facilities; and

a locate server process operable to:

receive the search request message from the locate client process;

search the automotive product availability data in the inventory database for automotive products matching and substantially matching the automotive product configuration data;

generate a search reply message containing the matching automotive products; and

return the search reply message to the locate client process.

3. The system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the search reply message comprises:

a list of automotive products and respective configuration data; and

a percentage value for each product in the list indicative of the degree of matching between the product and the automotive product configuration data contained in the search request message.

6. The system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the search reply message comprises a pointer to an image of each automotive product.

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7. The system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the locate server process comprises:

a listener operable to receive the search request message from the locate client process;

a parser operable to receive the search request message from the listener and extract message parameters; and

a searcher operable to search the automotive product availability data in the inventory database according to the message parameters.

10. An online method of locating a automotive (consumer) product having specific configuration in an enterprise production pipeline and inventory, comprising:

receiving a search request message having automotive product configuration data submitted by a user;

formulating a search query with search criteria corresponding to the automotive product configuration data;

searching automotive product availability data associated with automotive products that are on the order bank, in-production, in-transit, and in-inventory for a automotive product matching the automotive product configuration data;

generating a search reply message containing any automotive product determined based on the search of the automotive product availability data to substantially match the automotive product configuration data; and

sending the search reply message to the user.

11. The method, as set forth in claim 10, further comprising:

receiving the search request message on a predetermined port;

parsing the search request message to extract product configuration data; and

searching the automotive product availability data using the extracted automotive product configuration data.

13. The method, as set forth in claim 10, wherein generating the search reply message comprises:

compiling a list of products and respective configuration data; and

providing a percentage value for each automotive product in the list indicative of the degree of match between the automotive product and the automotive product configuration data contained in the search request message.

16. The method, as set forth in claim 10, further comprising:

displaying automotive product configuration information to the user on a web page; receiving automotive product configuration selection from the user; and

displaying a search result list of automotive product substantially matching the automotive product configuration and percentage matching data on a web page.

17. The method, as set forth in claim 10, further comprising: importing

in-inventory automotive product availability data from dealerships; and

importing in-process automotive product availability data from an enterprise database.

18. The method, as set forth in claim 10, wherein generating the search reply message comprises:

incorporating a unique identifier of each substantially matching automotive product; incorporating automotive product configuration data of each substantially matching automotive product; and

sorting the substantially matching automotive products by descending degree of match between the automotive product configuration data of the automotive products and the automotive product configuration data in the search request message.

19. The method, as set forth in claim 10, further comprising:

receiving a tag request message submitted by the user, the tag request message containing a unique product identifier;

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modifying the automotive product availability data associated with the automotive product identified by the unique automotive product identifier in the inventory database; and

generating a tag reply message confirming the completion of tagging the identified product.

20. The method, as set forth in claim 19, further comprising suppressing the tagged automotive product from subsequent search requests.

21. The method, as set forth in claim 16, further comprising displaying an image of the automotive product in response to receiving a user selection input.

22. The method, as set forth in claim 16, further comprising displaying detailed information associated with a automotive product in response to receiving a user selection input.

23. The method, as set forth in claim 16, further comprising:
receiving a user selection input of a automotive product in the list;
generating a search request message having an unique automotive product identifier associated with the selected automotive product;


searching the automotive product availability data for detailed data associated with the unique automotive product identifier;
generating a search reply message having the detailed data.


Reason for allowance

5. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: the prior art of record does not teach or suggest, individually or in combination of the environment of a online system for locating a automotive product and vehicle having specific configuration in an enterprise production pipeline, which is having an inventory database that stores automotive product availability data for automotive products that are on the order bank, being produced, in-transit to distribution facilities, and automotive products at the distribution facilities in combination with a locate server process which retrieves product availability data in the inventory database for products matching and substantially matching the automotive production configuration data, and generating and returning a reply message to the consumer in lights of other features as recited in each of the independent claims 1, 10, 24, and 38. Therefore claims 1, 10, 24, 38 and the claims depending on them are allowable over the prior art of record.
6. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."
7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Liang-che Alex Wang whose telephone number is (571)272-3992. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm.

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8. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hosain T Alam can be reached on (571)272-3978. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.
9. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free)..

Liang-che Alex Wang 
November 2, 2004


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SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER